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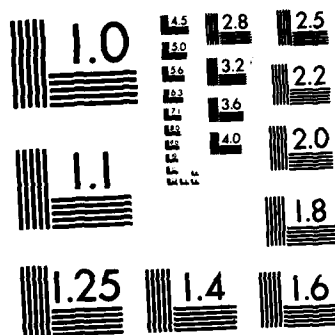
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SOVIET POLICY STATEMENTS AND MILITARY  
DEPLOYMENTS IN NORTHEAST ASIA

Lilita Dzirkals

October 1978

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SOVIET POLICY STATEMENTS AND MILITARY DEPLOYMENTS  
IN NORTHEAST ASIA

Lilita Dzirkals\*

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INTRODUCTION

It has been a constant Soviet policy goal to prevent an alliance of hostile powers on the USSR's eastern borders. In the postwar period, Moscow expressed intense concerns around 1965 about the Northeast Asia Treaty Organization (NEATO), promoted by the United States. Developments in the last few years have again intensified Soviet fears, this time about the possibility of a hostile China-Japan alliance, which could also involve the United States.

Soviet policy has tried to prevent this development in a two-fold manner: by probing for possibilities of cooperation with each of the major powers and by concentrating considerable military force in the region to show its determination to react forcefully to any infringement upon its vital security interests. It appears that Soviet military preparations have undermined rather than helped their diplomatic efforts. There has been no tangible progress in cooperation between the Soviets and the other major powers in Northeast Asia, and the latter have professed themselves to be distrustful of the Soviets precisely because the Russians have a concentrated military capability in the area.

That the USSR has not chosen to make any good-will gestures in this respect, bespeaks an underlying conviction that relations in Northeast Asia will continue to be based on rivalry, not cooperation in the foreseeable future. The Soviets see their military strength as a necessary guarantee that this rivalry stop short of infringing upon vital Soviet interests.

\* This is an enlarged version of a paper prepared for the Conference on Security Arrangements in Northeast Asia, 1945-1980, sponsored by the Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., June 19-23, 1978.

Up to now, the Soviets have regarded the United States as the main force responsible for Asian developments unfavorable to the USSR. Now Moscow's concern has shifted to China as its most determined and active Asian opponent. Japan, too, is increasingly viewed as evolving into an independent threat to the Soviet Union.

These trends give rise to demonstrated Soviet perceptions that it is with the United States that the USSR must cooperate and reach an understanding in Asia. The United States must be dissuaded from single-mindedly pursuing a global balance-of-power policy directed against the USSR and brought to share the Soviet goal in Asia, namely, thwarting the power aspirations of China and Japan. Then, the gathering threats to Soviet security in Northeast Asia would lose their immediacy. In the absence of active U.S. support, these Asian powers would require considerable time to develop sufficient military strength to threaten the USSR. Under these circumstances, the Soviets could pursue diplomatic and economic initiatives aimed at encouraging the interest of Peking and Tokyo in cooperation with the USSR and might expect a more ready response to such initiatives.

Until the summer of 1977, the overall Soviet view of security prospects in East Asia had for some years been one of guarded optimism. This was the view prevailing during the years following U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam, while the Soviets still could aspire realistically to reaching some accommodation with Mao's successors in China. Although Moscow's propaganda continued to warn of potential threats generated by U.S., Japanese, or Chinese military policies, Soviet analysts emphasized the positive aspects of the changing situation in Asia, professing to see favorable realignments in the foreign policies of the Asian states resulting from the reduced U.S. presence in the region. Wherever possible, these writers highlighted the interest which Asian states had shown in expanding diplomatic and economic contacts with the Soviet Union.

While much of this optimism may have been genuine, some of it could have been projected as a cover for the political and military vulnerability of the USSR, in Northeast Asia particularly.

One in a set of conference papers by different authors, this paper focuses on evidence which supports the argument that Moscow will likely

seek to avert developing long-range threats to Soviet security in Northeast Asia by following a policy geared toward finding a common ground for conciliation and cooperation with each of the major powers in the area. The paper also demonstrates that such a policy logically derives from the fact that disadvantageous geographic factors would frustrate effective Soviet force employment in the Pacific theater in a major conflict with neighboring powers, who themselves possessed modern military capabilities or could rely on the United States to enter into the conflict as their ally.

The paper relies on both Soviet and Western sources. It describes Soviet views on security in Northeast Asia as they have been presented in Soviet research analyses and commentary, published during the 1970s. Information on Soviet military deployments was compiled from Western sources. Research on the paper was concluded in May 1978 and thus could not utilize materials on the Soviet reaction to subsequent major developments, such as the Brzezinski visit to Peking and the signing of the Sino-Japanese friendship treaty.

In describing Soviet views, I have relied rather heavily on several Soviet books on Asia. These not only contain some substantive ideas on Asian security, but appear to represent authoritative Soviet views. One author, Ivan Kovalenko, is known to be affiliated with the Central Committee's International Department; another, Dmitrii Petrov, is a Japan scholar who has served as a Soviet spokesman abroad, attending academic conferences, and another, Major General Rair Simonian, is a professor at the Frunze Academy, who also writes for *Pravda* on military-strategic issues.

Soviet actions and deployments alone do not explain Soviet policy in Asia. Their official statements are too sparse, too non-substantive and cautious to tell us what motivations drive Soviet policy or to suggest its possible variations in response to the changing international environment. The unofficial statements upon which I have relied, however, articulate in fairly concrete terms the central assumptions and expectations that underlie Soviet policy in Asia. While these views cannot with certainty be said to be those of Soviet decisionmakers, the fact that they have been approved for publication, shows that they fall

within the permissible norms of discussion. These opinions are consistent with policy, offering justifications for it and recommending ways of more widely implementing it. The timing of these statements is also important: new themes appear in response to adjustments of policy. The significance of any declaration depends upon who authored it and where it appeared.

If published in *Pravda* or *Kommunist*, the CPSU Central Committee journal, these statements may be intended for both domestic and foreign audiences, either as trial balloons or as actual statements of Soviet policy. The specialized academic journals, such as those of the USA and Canada Institute and the Far East Institute, also appear to have a dual role. They communicate to a specialized Soviet audience and to foreign audiences with access to policymakers abroad. These journals substantively discuss Asian policy issues, yet leave much to be read between the lines. I have found that the most revealing discussion has been in books, probably because it is expected that they will almost exclusively be limited to a specialist audience in the USSR.

Open Soviet literature does not discuss Soviet military deployments in the Far East. But Soviet publications were found to contain interesting observations on the military potentials and security policies of other powers in the region, which illuminate some of the key calculations that enter into the formulation of Soviet Asian policy. Some works are quite informative regarding Soviet perceptions of the political and diplomatic approaches available to Moscow for fashioning a more favorable Asian security environment.

#### THE UNITED STATES

Despite the mounting animosity between Moscow and Peking, the Soviets have continued to perceive the United States as the main threat in Northeast Asia. The potential U.S. threat is depicted as two-fold: 1) the possibility of Sino-U.S. linkage, which would diminish dangerously Soviet regional as well as global security, and 2) the possibility of U.S. intervention in Asian internal conflict.

U.S. activities have remained the main focus of Soviet commentary on Asia, which scrutinizes every U.S. military and political move for

intentions that would be inimical to the USSR or its Asian allies. Developments in the independent Asian states which have any security implication whatsoever are always examined from the standpoint of what they mean for the United States, and whether they are part of some U.S.-inspired design against the USSR and its "natural allies," the national liberation movement. Thus, the main concern remains focused on the potential for U.S. intervention in an Asian conflict, directly or by proxy. In contrast, Soviet discussions regarding China's policies in Asia have related to Chinese intentions rather than their capabilities.

The Soviets also express a general apprehension regarding the possibility of a catalytic war in Asia. They have depicted the economic problems and social antagonisms plaguing Asian states as creating pressures that threaten to erupt into armed conflicts, which could occasion the intervention of outside powers. Invoking the experience of the Vietnam war, Soviet commentators warn that local conflicts can become international conflicts, leading to a global confrontation. Moreover, as long as nuclear weapons are present in the region, the danger remains that an armed conflict could become nuclear. This problem is particularly acute in Asia, where the strategic interests of the three great powers compete. The policies advocated in the United States, which gamble on a military clash between the USSR and China, and the policies pursued by the Maoists, which gamble on provoking a nuclear conflict between the USSR and the United States, exacerbate this danger.

The Soviets have promoted their scheme for a collective Asian security system as the solution to the risk of a global confrontation arising from an Asian conflict. A book-length Soviet study of collective security in Asia, published in 1976, elaborated on the Soviet proposal as an alternative to the "balance-of-power" approach to Asian security, which it claimed was widely supported in the United States and "especially in Japan." Authored by I. Kovalenko, reportedly a staff member of the CPSU Central Committee's International Department, the study rejected the balance-of-power concept "in any form," because it leads to allying some powers against others. Balance of power is not a viable solution to security, because it is essentially destabilizing and entails "inevitable" miscalculation. This is an unacceptable risk in relations involving nuclear powers.



Kovalenko was particularly concerned about the pivotal role that the balance-of-power policy pursued by the United States allocates to Japan. He claimed that ambitious and calculating nationalist elements in Japan were set to avail themselves of the opportunities inherent in the balance-of-forces approach to increase Japan's military and political power in Asia. As to the uses to which such power would be put, Kovalenko cited Japan's interests in Southeast Asia, its claim of Soviet aggressiveness and irridentist hope with respect to the Soviet-held northern territories. More ominously, Peking was manipulating these Japanese concerns in a scheme to involve Japan in China's anti-Soviet policy in Asia. Allegedly proposing a Sino-Japanese condominium to keep "Asia for Asians," the Chinese scheme was not limited to bringing Japan into a military-political pact directed against the Soviet Union. In the longer term, it also planned to turn Japan into a Chinese satellite, which would eventually cut its economic ties with the United States and also become politically dependent on the People's Republic of China.<sup>1</sup>

Kovalenko predicted that China would continue to seek to create a "broad bloc under Peking's aegis." Moreover, China showed continued willingness to join any bloc directed against the USSR. "The situation forming in Asia," namely, "the mutual understanding gradually taking shape between Peking and imperialism in the struggle against world socialism," called for "heightened vigilance." Charging that some Western politicians were making global calculations based on the possibility of armed conflict between the USSR and China, Kovalenko termed these goals primitive and shortsighted. Denying that the USSR ever had any plans to attack China or any other country, he nevertheless invoked Soviet military might as the critical factor that would foil such considerations:

The authors of such calculations should keep in mind that the USSR, possessing enormous military-economic might and enjoying the support of all peace-loving peoples, can wreck any anti-Soviet plots, from wherever they originate.

Reliance on military deterrence to frustrate Chinese and imperialist collusion was even more forcefully advocated during the same period by

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<sup>1</sup>Kovalenko (1976), p. 338.

Marshal Kulikov, the chief of Soviet General Staff. Terming Maoist foreign policy a serious threat to peace, and "an important reserve for imperialism in its struggle against socialism," Kulikov claimed that strengthening the defense capability of the USSR and other socialist countries was "the most important factor in preventing wars and strengthening international security in the present circumstances."<sup>1</sup>

These statements illustrate typical Soviet attempts to dissuade the United States from siding with China in a mutually reinforced anti-Soviet strategy in Asia: stressing that Peking's long-range interests are inimical to U.S. presence in Asia, and emphasizing Soviet military power as a deterrent of Sino-U.S. collaboration in military actions against the Soviet Union.

However, other statements have signalled tentative Soviet readiness for an actively cooperative policy in order to prevent U.S. reliance on Peking by suggesting that Moscow could recognize legitimate U.S. interests in Asia.

Soviet specialists on U.S. Asian policy have expressed a generally sanguine view about U.S. role in Northeast Asia. In May 1976, V. Lukin of the USA Institute was optimistic that awareness of fundamental U.S. interests would preclude U.S. policy from seeking more than limited cooperation with China. The United States realized that in order to solve any of the larger, global problems constructive U.S.-Soviet relations were necessary.

Hence, there is sufficiently clear realization of the priority of Soviet-U.S. relations over those of the U.S. and the PRC. Hence, the obvious resistance to the Maoists and the unwillingness to meet them halfway on issues that would endanger the present development of U.S.-USSR relations or the prospects for further improvement of the international situation as a whole.

In Lukin's estimation, the U.S. will cooperate with Peking's anti-Soviet policy only to a limited extent and "will not subordinate its interests to the unmanageable anti-Soviet complex of the Maoist leadership." Moreover, he felt that proposals to sell U.S. arms to China were

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<sup>1</sup> *Izvestia*, May 8, 1976.

rejected by "the majority of Washington's responsible political leaders who do not intend to follow this dangerous path. They draw a distinct line between their own interests and the aspirations of the Maoists."

Lukin also portrayed the U.S. as being profoundly wary of its Japanese ally because of the latter's possible rapprochement with China. Solidifying the U.S.-Japanese military-political alliance would, in American eyes, guarantee U.S. domination over Japan and also a privileged U.S. position vis-a-vis the Soviet Union and China in Asia. Lukin claimed that Washington "watches with uneasiness the active efforts of the Maoists in Japan," and that some U.S. studies had warned that by the 1980s Japan could have a government more inclined than the present one toward improved relations with China "on the conditions of the latter." He, too, promoted the notion that during the negotiations of the Sino-Japanese treaty, Peking had tried to induce Japan to join not only an anti-Soviet accord but "in the larger strategic perspective also an anti-American platform having as its 'denominator' a pan-Asian racist touch." He claimed that

Naturally, such plans cannot suit the U.S.; they give rise to latent, yet...very profound U.S.-China contradictions.

In fact, Lukin was implying that closer U.S.-Japanese relations would be a desirable development.

Turning to the Ford Administration's Pacific Doctrine, he acknowledged as valid its claim that Asia's importance for U.S. diplomacy had increased, and thought it "not surprising" that the United States had increased its reliance on naval deployments and island bases in the Pacific to compensate for political setbacks in Asia. However, he warned that any practical inclusion of Peking in the U.S. security system in the Pacific "can bring nothing but woe to the cause of peace."

Lukin concluded that the United States should instead be interested in a "multilateral dialogue" that would develop proposals for collective security in Asia. He pursued this intimation of Soviet willingness to consider U.S. views on Asian security in a subsequent article in July 1976. Favorably reviewing Ralph Clough's book, *East Asia and U.S. Security*, Lukin took issue solely with what he claimed was a "balance-of-power" perspective, urging that Clough's otherwise acceptable

recommendations should be based instead on "starting principles that are sounder and more in accord with the spirit of the times."

In 1975 and 1976, *Kommunist* and *Far Eastern Affairs* recalled the Pacific Ocean Pact that the USSR had proposed to the United States in 1933. That proposal grew out of the CPSU Central Committee decision to embark on a diplomatic offensive for collective security pacts to counter Germany and Japan. The Soviets proposed a regional non-aggression pact that would include the USSR, the United States, China and Japan. They also suggested that the official initiative for this pact should come from the U.S. side. After several years of diplomatic soundings, the Soviets made another approach to the U.S. in 1937, but were conclusively turned down by President Roosevelt, according to current Soviet accounts, for the reason that: "There is no faith in pacts...the main guarantee is a strong navy...let's see how the Japanese would withstand a naval competition."<sup>1</sup>

Soviet endorsement of the historical overture to the United States and of Soviet diplomatic efforts in Asia in the 1920s to conclude "non-aggression (or neutrality) treaties with imperialist states as well" appeared well before Peking's rapprochement with the capitalist powers and the deepened deterioration in Sino-Soviet relations following Mao's death. Since then, Soviet overtures to the United States have been more pointed.

At a joint Soviet-American conference on Asia, held in the United States in early 1977, Soviet China scholar Boris Zanegin termed unfounded U.S. apprehensions that the Soviet-proposed Asian collective security system would impair the existing U.S. security system in the Pacific, which relies on bilateral and multilateral military-political alliances. The Soviet spokesman invoked the Helsinki agreement as precedent for a detente arrangement that did not require rejection of existing political-military blocs. Although disbanding the present closed blocs in Asia was the ultimate goal of Soviet policy, its implementation would be contingent on the new system's developing first

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<sup>1</sup>Kutakov (1976); Vorontsov and Kapustin (1975).

into an "effective factor contributing to the maintenance of universal and equal security of all states of the Pacific region."<sup>1</sup>

This Soviet position was further softened in a book, *U.S. Policy in Asia*, put out by the USA Institute in late 1977. Likely intended for a U.S. audience as well as for the Soviet foreign policy community, this work bespeaks increased determination to interest the U.S. in exploring cooperation with the USSR in Asia. V. Lukin, identified as the leader of the group of twelve authors, contributes a section on "The Possibilities for a Constructive Dialog."<sup>2</sup> He identifies the "important common interests" that the United States and the USSR share in Asia and the rest of the world, namely:

- o averting thermonuclear war
- o a "qualitative" augmentation of the international role of Asian states
- o the multilateral character of international relations in Asia
- o nuclear non-proliferation in Asia
- o freedom of the seas and security of sea lanes in the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

Affirming the soundness of the Asian collective security concept, Lukin claims that in rejecting this concept U.S. policymakers break with the historic U.S. approach to foreign policy problems, which has sought to express international security obligations in juridical form. U.S. opposition so far has stemmed from an "irrational fear" of China's reaction. Real U.S. interests would benefit from assenting to examine Asian issues on a collective basis.

U.S. "theoreticians" wrongly fear that implementing the Soviet proposal would "negatively affect" the existing system of U.S. bilateral and regional treaties in Asia. These concerns are due to insufficient information about the Soviet proposal. Restricted bilateral or bloc alliances would be dissolved only in the final stage of the Soviet-proposed Asian collective security system. The current Soviet proposal

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<sup>1</sup>Zanegin (1977).

<sup>2</sup>Kremeniuk et al (1977), pp. 246-254.

does not encompass this distant stage. Instead, the proposal envisions an arrangement similar to that in Europe, where existing pacts and the new collective security agreement will coexist for a long time.

Lukin then sketches possible "concrete forms of great power participation in an Asian collective community (*obshchezhitie*) system." Practical proposals that could be examined on a collective basis with U.S. participation would include:

- o The ASEAN proposal on Southeast Asia's neutrality
- o sub-regional non-nuclear zones
- o new Asian organizations; or else, collective or separate-but-parallel guarantees to be extended by the great powers to selected existing intra-Asian associations or individual Asian states.<sup>1</sup>

In conclusion, Lukin invokes the precedent of the European security conference in Helsinki, where the United States played a "constructive role" despite its initial reservations. Statements made by the new Carter Administration (particularly regarding the necessity of a gradual U.S. troop withdrawal from South Korea) provide grounds for hoping that the United States could participate "in a serious multilateral discussion of the question of strengthening peace and security in Asia."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Kremeniuk et al (1977), p. 252.

<sup>2</sup>Favorably reviewing the book in *Izvestiia*, the doyen of Soviet Far East experts, S. Tikhvinsky, again emphasized that "U.S. involvement in serious multilateral discussion of questions of strengthening peace and security in Asia would be an important step on the path of relaxation of international tension." (*Izvestiia*, January 5, 1978.) Lukin's optimistic view of the new Administration's Asian policy has probably been dampened by subsequent developments. Nevertheless, in a recent article in the Tbilisi newspaper *Zarya Vostoka*, Lukin argues that the "real contradictions" between the United States and China remain unsolved, that the anti-Soviet position espoused by Brzezinski during his Peking visit was an attempt to becloud these contradictions by "phraseology," and that a U.S.-PRC rapprochement on an anti-Soviet basis lacks domestic political support. (*Zarya Vostoka*, August 22, 1978, translated in FBIS, *Daily Report: Soviet Union*, August 31, 1978, pp. B4-B6.)

CHINA

The Soviet analyses discussed suggest that the paramount Soviet concern is to prevent a collaboration between the U.S. and the PRC, not only because of its global implications, but equally from the standpoint of Soviet security in Northeast Asia. A U.S.-China understanding would encourage Peking's militancy vis-a-vis the USSR, which could provoke a Soviet reaction and spark a broader conflict. The alarm that Soviets profess about China's alleged intentions to precipitate a nuclear war between the USSR and the U.S. also reflects Russian concerns regarding Peking's approaches to NATO countries and its efforts to fuel the resentments of the East European states.

Otherwise, China's threat in Asia, its expansionist policy, has been generally defined as directed "primarily" to the Pacific Ocean and Southeast Asia, which by definition excludes the USSR. Major Soviet statements have stressed China's present inferior military and economic capabilities.

In response to Peking's hostility, the Soviets have urged "joint efforts" to terminate Peking's plans to attain hegemony by provoking others into a world war. Moreover, they have brought pressure to bear in Northeast Asia by amassing military forces in the region and signaling Moscow's confidence that its military power guarantees Soviet security in the Far East, if all else should fail.

Recent Soviet press comment suggests that important Soviet elite elements realize that the hardnosed, uncompromising Soviet stand toward China is counterproductive. In 1977, *Literaturnaiia Gazeta* presented a series of articles by veteran political commentators Ernst Genri and Fyodor Burlatsky, which depicted China on the verge of being seduced by ex-Wehrmacht generals and elements of the U.S. leadership into a plot of a joint war against the USSR. Burlatsky, a political observer for *Pravda*, who on past occasions has been a spokesman for Soviet liberal-progressive views, claimed that China was going along with the anti-Soviet schemes of Western powers, including those of the U.S., because of the opportunistic motivation to elicit economic and military assistance. Burlatsky advised Peking that it was still not too late to change its political orientation and choose the only advantageous

direction for China, namely, "political detente and cooperation" with the socialist countries, China's "natural allies." He admitted that China can expect economic and political benefits from its present policy of rapprochement with the capitalist West and also from a more moderate policy of maneuvering between the USSR and the United States. But he also advanced a counter-offer. "Full restoration of friendship and cooperation with the USSR and the socialist community" by Peking would lead to "equal cooperation and mutual assistance with the socialist states for the modernization of its economy." Burlatsky's formulation is a more flexible and forthcoming proposal of economic rewards than the one made by Brezhnev at the 25th CPSU Congress in early 1976, which Burlatsky cited in his article. The key difference lies in Brezhnev's specifying Peking's "return to a policy of true Marxism-Leninism," solidarity with the socialist world, and socialist internationalism--rather than just "friendship and cooperation"--as the condition for "an appropriate response on our part."

Likely, the more accommodating views have been in a minority, which would explain why the Soviets have until now failed to make attractive offers to the PRC. At the same time, published Soviet comment does not reveal whether those ready to scale down the political demands on Peking are also willing to accommodate Peking's insistence that Moscow must reduce its military pressure on the Sino-Soviet border before any meaningful negotiations can be initiated. The Chinese raised this demand again in response to Moscow's latest official approach to Peking last February, when the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet sent a message to the Chinese National People's Congress, proposing immediate negotiations on normalizing relations and resuming economic, scientific, and technical cooperation.

In reply, Peking demanded a settlement of the "disputed territories" question and Soviet troop withdrawal from Mongolia as preconditions for entering into talks on the normalization of relations. In the ensuing mutual recriminations, Moscow accused Peking of taking a "provocative position." The alarmist level and volume of Soviet anti-Chinese propaganda mounted, and in April Brezhnev, together with Defense Minister Ustinov, demonstratively went on an inspection tour of military installations and troops in Siberia and the Far East.



But the Soviets also signalled their continued interest in pursuing the negotiatory approach. They sent Deputy Foreign Minister Ilichev back to Peking for border talks. Moreover, the handling of Peking's demand for Soviet troop withdrawal from Mongolia suggested that this issue was negotiable, should Peking modify its hostile stance toward Mongolia and the USSR. The protest note that Soviet ally Mongolia sent to Peking on April 12 reminded Peking that "during the 1950s when normal relations were maintained between Mongolia and China, the MPR not only did not have any Soviet military units on its territory, but even reduced to a minimum its own armed forces and abolished its border troops." The note identified "normal interstate relations" as the immediate Mongolian objective in relations with China and declared that such were possible if Peking would display "common sense and a realistic attitude." It suggested that the principle of peaceful coexistence and the spirit of "good-neighborliness" and mutual understanding would be a sufficient basis for normalized relations. Was this language intended to imply that a withdrawal of Soviet troops from the MPR could be had in exchange for a show of "common sense" and "spirit of good-neighborliness?" That this was so, was strongly suggested by the fact that two days later a Soviet broadcast to China reiterated the offer formulated in the Mongolian note:

If the Chinese leadership abandons its policy of advocating the annexation of the MPR and takes the road toward friendship with the MPR and the Soviet Union, the need to station Soviet troops in the MPR will end. When and how soon this will happen depends on the Chinese side.

If nothing else, this suggests a Soviet perception that to make headway in improving their security in Northeast Asia they will have to be more forthcoming with attractive offers that recognize the concerns of other powers in the region. In practice, while upholding the Asian collective security concept as a long-term goal, the Soviet have sought to promote--as intermediate steps--bilateral or multilateral treaties with Asian states, which would pledge peaceful settlement of disputes. The "good neighborliness and cooperation" treaty proposed by the Soviets to Japan is an example of this approach. The Soviet message to the Chinese National People's Congress also spoke of restoring relations of

"cooperation and good-neighborliness," as did Mongolia's note to Peking. These could be clues that the Soviets envision the possibility that some new form of international agreement--more innocuous than their traditional treaties of friendship and cooperation--could provide them with the opportunity to establish non-confrontation relations with China and Japan, which would be devoid of any Soviet bloc connotations. Thus, relations developing on the basis of "cooperation and good-neighborliness" would eschew a shared ideological commitment, would acknowledge the persistence of antagonisms and conflicting interests, but would commit the sides to a process of negotiating solutions of their differences.

Such treaties or agreements would also in themselves signify acceptance of the Soviet Union's right to be directly involved in Asian affairs. The Soviets may further envision that such treaties could lead to broader subregional security pacts in Asia. The Kovalenko work endorsed such pacts, provided they are (1) open to any state adhering to the principles of peaceful coexistence, and (2) conceived as intermediate steps toward an all-Asian security system.<sup>1</sup>

Other signs of a tentative regearing of Moscow's policy toward pragmatic, antagonistic/cooperative quadrilateral politics in Northeast Asia appear in more recent Soviet literature on Korea and Japan.

#### KOREA

The Soviets do not perceive any immediate danger of a military conflict in Korea. In 1976, a Soviet military specialist on Korea, General V. Matsulenکو, asserted that North Korea was capable of defending itself. Moreover, he made no mention of imperialist plans of aggression against North Korea and failed to mention the Soviet-North Korean treaty. By contrast, in 1970, Matsulenکو had termed North Korea "a constant object of the aggressive encroachments of imperialism," claiming that the "Soviet-Korean treaty strengthens the international position of the DPRK and guarantees the security of its borders." And in 1969, Brezhnev

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<sup>1</sup>Kovalenko (1976), pp. 400-401.

had reaffirmed Soviet support of North Korea, alleging that it was continually subjected to provocations by the United States and South Korea.

The differences between the 1970 and 1976 commentaries also reflect the cooling in Soviet-Korean relations during this period. North Korea became a member of the nonaligned movement, and around 1973, the Soviets gave signs of wanting to open up relations with South Korea. The down-playing of the "imperialist," or U.S. threat thus signalled Soviet disinclination to support any North Korean military ventures.

The Soviets may well view their socialist ally as a liability. Obligated by the mutual friendship and mutual assistance treaty to aid North Korea in case of war, the Soviets nevertheless have limited leverage over that state's policy. Pyongyang's maneuvering between China and the USSR, its provocations against U.S. forces stationed in Korea, and its diplomatic and economic ventures abroad make it a capricious ally, who is more risk than benefit. The military risk involves possible nuclear confrontation with the U.S.

Soviet writings highlight the military strength of South Korea and note that the United States has deployed about 720 nuclear weapons in the country. The North Korean claim that the United States had turned South Korea in a "base for nuclear attack" gets cited, but then moderated somewhat by parallel assertions that South Korea is completely dependent on the United States and that "the U.S. keeps the South Korean armed forces under its control."

Initially, the Soviets assessed as a "positive development" the Carter Administration's proposal to start a gradual withdrawal of U.S. troops from South Korea. But in the wake of the discussions held by U.S. officials in South Korea and Japan last summer and the disclosure of U.S. plans to provide sizeable assistance to South Korea in its \$5 billion military modernization program, Soviet press comment denounced the Administration's troop withdrawal proposal as "camouflage for the further strengthening of the war machine of dictator Park Chung-hee through deliveries of the latest military equipment." It noted that it had been proposed to supply the South Korean forces with nuclear-capable Honest John missiles and decried the proposed modernization and build-up

of Seoul's armed forces as the "source of possible provocations and conflicts" in light of the Park regime's stated commitment to unify Korea via attaining victory over communism.

Recent comment stresses that U.S. withdrawal from Korea on the present terms would, in actuality, result in an increase of not only South Korean but also U.S. military potential in Asia. But this comment also acknowledges that it is important for the U.S. to retain its strategic and political positions in South Korea. South Korea is the last U.S. outpost on the Asian mainland, and its loss could lead to a change in Japan's political orientation and have serious consequences for U.S. presence in Northeast Asia as a whole. The earlier U.S. doctrine of relying on its Asian allies has proven impractical, primarily because these allies are disunited in their policies vis-a-vis Peking. Thus, Japan's professed "independence" in its Asia policy is a serious worry to South Korea and Taiwan. This particular commentary, published in the *Far Eastern Affairs* journal at the end of last year, also points out that during the Nixon and Ford Administrations, Washington closely coordinated its Korea stand with Peking, aiming to restrict also further discussions on Korea to a narrow circle dominated by Washington and Peking. The commentary hinted that the Soviets would be willing to explore a great power understanding on Korea, including the United States. Defining the "Korea problem" as "very complex," it stated that nevertheless opportunities were present for "the search of an acceptable alternative, which meets the needs of the Korean people and also takes into account the position of the major powers of the region--Japan, the United States, the PRC, and the USSR."<sup>1</sup>

So far, Soviet statements have insisted that a U.S. withdrawal be "unconditional," that is, not accompanied by the buildup of South Korea or other U.S. forces in the region. This, they claim, would open up the possibility for solving the "Korean problem" by the Korean people themselves. The recent euphemism, "solving the Korean problem," stops short of identifying Soviet goals in Korea and also avoids identifying Korean unification as a goal of Soviet policy. Official statements,

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<sup>1</sup>Kapustin (1977, p. 124.

such as, for example, the one by Brezhnev last June, have endorsed North Korean demands for a complete withdrawal of U.S. troops and a "peaceful and democratic" unification of the country, but have softened this by adding that this is not only a Soviet position but one that is shared by the majority of UN states.

Projecting a moderate stand on Korea may serve the Soviet goal to allay U.S. concerns about Soviet intentions in Korea, but it has not served to warm relations between the USSR and North Korea. The Soviets have tried to improve these relations with the recent visits to Pyongyang by East German party boss Honecker and Soviet Politburo member Kunayev, who presented the Order of Lenin to Kim Il-sung. Yet, Kunayev nobably failed to elicit official North Korean agreement with his claim that the 1961 Soviet-Korean treaty "truly meets the interests of our countries and the cause of peace and security."

#### JAPAN

Soviet statements constantly warn that Japan is a developing military threat to the USSR as well as Asian states. Definitions of the nature of this threat vary. Commonly, Japan's military policies are attributed to U.S. pressure, resulting from U.S. efforts to develop Japan as a military proxy in Asia. But since 1969, there has been growing emphasis on Japanese domestic political forces as the source of militarist trends. The alarmist pitch of this argument has declined somewhat in recent years. In 1969, an *International Affairs* article claimed that the goal of Japan's militarists was preparation for a nuclear war and a preemptive attack against the USSR. This hardline view appeared also in a 1972 study, put out by the Academy of Sciences and the Defense Ministry, which also alleged that Japan's military establishment regarded a war with the Soviet Union as inevitable. Since then, Soviet explanations of the motives behind the Japanese military buildup have been moderated. They invoke the profit motive of the Japanese military-industrial complex and cite Japanese statements about the need to bring their military power in line with Japan's economic potential, ensuring a political balance of forces in Asia, etc. Japanese irridentist claims to the Southern Kuriles are presented as a pretext

rather than the motive for Japan's military programs. The Soviet literature thus reflects the thaw in Moscow-Tokyo relations, signified by the resumption of negotiations on a peace treaty in 1973.

Soviet statements stress that Japan is the only Asian country through its own efforts capable of developing its armed forces beyond the existing level. It is a modern industrial state, which already produces 97 percent of its munitions and 84 percent of the materiel needs of its forces. Its population of 112 million affords Japan the potential to create a mass army. Moreover, its nuclear know-how and technology already enable it to develop atomic weapons.

Yet another Soviet projection of Japan as an independent military threat in Asia envisions the distant possibility that Japan's military power may eventually come to be directed against the United States. This speculation seldom occurs; however, it did appear in a 1969 article;<sup>1</sup> it was emphatically dismissed as unlikely "in the near future" in a 1973 analysis,<sup>2</sup> and more recently has been invoked in an indirect manner through references to ambiguous statements in either U.S. or Japanese sources.<sup>3</sup> Moscow may well be surfacing this notion due to its utility in stimulating U.S. distrust of its ally, rather than actually counting on it in long-range Soviet calculations.

Such calculations appear to consider seriously the possibility of more independent and assertive policies by Japan in the not-too-distant future. A 1973 analysis by D. Petrov suggested that a new military situation would emerge in the 1980s, when Japan was likely to have acquired a substantial military capability of its own and would no longer be merely the junior partner of the U.S. Japan's decision to increase its military capability was dictated by the larger goal of "preparing the material, moral, and political foundation for Japan's debut on the world scene as a strong military power in the not so distant future, roughly in the 1980s." Currently, however, it was not likely that Japan

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<sup>1</sup>Sergienko, p. 34

<sup>2</sup>Petrov, pp. 126, 129, 134.

<sup>3</sup>Ponomareva (1976), p. 35.

would become involved actively in military actions against the USSR or the PRC, or against the states of Southeast Asia, because Japanese leaders perceived a "peacemaker" role to be more advantageous to their long-term interests.

Petrov noted Japan's increasing responsibilities in the U.S. military-strategic system in Asia, but identified these responsibilities as entailing passive logistical support of military operations by others rather than direct Japanese combat involvement. For, it was Japan's long-range plans to become an independent Asian military power, which prompted it to seek an even more active and expanded role under the U.S.-Japanese treaty provisions.

But these ambitions were frustrated by deliberate U.S. efforts to "control" Tokyo, in the first place, by preventing its acquisition of an independent nuclear capability.<sup>1</sup> Petrov's analysis implied that the Soviets perceive weaknesses in the U.S.-Japanese military relationship, which diminish its threat as an intervention instrument in Asia. These weaknesses afford Soviets the opportunity: 1) to inhibit Japanese military actions by stoking Japanese nationalism, namely, by claiming that Japan's dependency on the U.S. puts Japan in the "role of the monkey pulling U.S. chestnuts out of the fire," and 2) to deter Japan by threats to employ "modern types of weapons" against its territory if U.S. forces stationed in Japan become involved in hostilities.

On the rare occasions that Soviet literature has explicitly commented on possible scenarios in case of hostilities in the Far East, it has singled out Japan as the most likely target for retaliatory strikes. To be sure, this comment does not explicitly specify that such retaliation would be carried out by Soviet forces. It depicts Japan's security treaty with the U.S. as a factor that would automatically involve Japan in military actions "if U.S. bases on Japan's territory are subjected to a retaliatory strike as a result of provocative action by U.S. troops." Moreover,

this creates a very real danger for Japan to become drawn into any military conflict unleashed in the Far East by the U.S., the Kuomintang, or South Korea, inasmuch<sup>2</sup> as all of them are tied to the U.S. by military treaties.

<sup>1</sup>Petrov (1973), p. 124; Sergienko (1969), p. 34.

<sup>2</sup>Petrov (1973), p. 88.

It is also implied that retaliation against Japan might be nuclear:

In case of any provocations initiated by U.S. forces based on its territory, Japan will of necessity inevitably find itself the object of a retaliatory strike, the entire consequences of which are hard to overestimate in view of the power of modern types of weapons and the exceptionally high population density of Japan.<sup>1</sup>

More explicit threats appeared in another Soviet study in 1972. It noted the "great vulnerability of Japan's manufacturing industry in a nuclear war" due to its high concentration, particularly in the regions around Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka, and Fukuoka. It also pointed out that Japan's economy is highly dependent on imported oil and industrial raw materials, and strategic materials enter the country through a "relatively limited number of ports." And "in case of war," it would not be "very difficult to interrupt Japan's naval communications."<sup>2</sup>

Having warned Japan of the consequences of its military responsibilities under the Japanese-American security treaty, Soviet analyses of recent years nevertheless no longer advocate abolishing the treaty or taking Japan out of the U.S. military-strategic system. Instead, they counsel Japan's autonomy "within the framework of the alliance with the U.S." through diversification of Japan's international political and economic contacts and reduction of U.S. autonomy over its bases on Japan's territory.

This stance is consistent with apparent Soviet calculations that threats of retaliation would deter Japan from supporting the U.S. in any military actions in Asia, and hence render Japan a weak link in a U.S.-led coalition. As was noted earlier, other Soviet comment also suggests that the U.S.-Japanese alliance could be a beneficial

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<sup>1</sup>Petrov (1973), pp. 94-95.

<sup>2</sup>*Japanskii militarizm* (1972), p. 271. Prepared jointly by the USSR Academy of Sciences and the Military History Institute of the USSR Defense Ministry, this extensive study presented a very hardline view of Japanese policy, arguing that joint U.S.-Japanese strategy defined the USSR as the chief enemy, that Japan's military doctrine was based on preventive war, and that its military establishment regarded a war with the Soviet Union as inevitable.



with the increasingly independent Japan of today is possible, and a 1977 publication, which reflects the present, more complex Soviet attitude. Petrov claims that in 1956 the Japanese hardened their position on Iturup and Kunashir "only because of direct pressure by Washington." V. N. Berezin, writing in 1977, accuses Japan's foreign minister at the time, Shigemitsu, of obstructing the negotiations in 1955 and claims that it was Japanese pressure that elicited Dulles' warning to Japan against relinquishing the islands to the Soviets. This recent explanation reflects the now prevalent Soviet view that their difficulties with Japan are due to negative attitudes within the Japanese leadership rather than U.S. pressure on Japan.

Thus, Soviet assumptions regarding policy approaches to Japan are beginning to resemble those that apply to the United States, i.e., Soviet policy must take into account the fact that the sober, realistic leadership elements have to contend with the hawks. If so, Soviet policy toward Japan might in the future rely on the model set by their approach to the U.S.: they will expect "zigzags" in the other side's position on contentious issues, but still accept negotiations as a feasible means for pursuing Soviet policy goals.

#### DEPLOYMENTS

All of the Soviet Union's neighbors in the Far East express concerns with Soviet military power located there. Yet, while that power is impressive, it has serious limitations insofar as performing missions other than defending the Soviet Pacific coast and Sino-Soviet border.

Over the last ten years, the Soviets have been constant in deploying roughly 30 percent of their total submarines and major warships (25-27 percent) with the Pacific Fleet. The same percentage of their naval aviation also is stationed in the Far East, i.e., about 340 aircraft. Approximately 25 percent of Soviet tactical air forces are also deployed in the Far East. In 1965, about 9 percent of the total Soviet ground forces were kept in the Far East. This percentage increased to about 27 percent by 1975.

Numerically, the present Soviet ground forces in the Far East are analogous to the 40 divisions that Moscow maintained in the area throughout

World War II to secure its borders against a possible Japanese invasion. In Soviet calculations at the time, that was a defensive, not offensive deployment, and they doubled the force before launching their attack on Japanese forces in Manchuria in August 1945. In the postwar period, when Sino-Soviet relations were friendly and Khrushchev was implementing his policy of cutting back defense spending, the Soviets kept only 15 divisions in the Far East. It was not until after China had exploded its first nuclear device and demonstrated increasing militancy vis-a-vis the USSR, which included presenting the Soviets with territorial claims on border areas, that Moscow reverted to the size of force it had historically maintained for defense in the Far East.

Until the 1969 border clashes on the Ussuri River, the Soviets deployed more ground force divisions in Central Asia than in the Far East. In the years 1967-1969, the number of Soviet Far East divisions actually decreased to 15 from the 17 deployed in prior years. Of these, about ten to twelve had been maintained at full combat strength, whereas all of the 22 divisions in Central Asia required major reinforcements to be combat-ready. The 15 Soviet divisions in the Far East faced 33 Chinese divisions deployed in North and Northeast China.

Following the 1969 border clashes, Soviet ground force deployments in the Far East increased by more than 100 percent: from 15 divisions in 1968 to 33 in 1971. The buildup continued over the next few years, with the Far East absorbing almost the entire increase in the Soviet ground forces during this period. During this time, deployments in Southern Russia and Central Asia decreased by seven divisions, suggesting that these may have been transferred to the Far East. The Chinese responded to the Soviet troop concentration by augmenting their deployments in the Manchurian theater. In 1974, the Soviets had 45 divisions in the Far East, the Chinese--50 in their Northern and Northeast military regions. Soviet personnel deployed, however, amounted to only 36 percent of that of the Chinese. This disproportion was offset by the higher mechanization and mobility of the Soviet units. Yet, Chinese aircraft, particularly transport aircraft, apparently also numerically considerably exceed the aircraft deployed by the Soviets in the Far East.

Only about 25 percent of the Soviet divisions deployed in the Far East are estimated to be combat-ready. One-third of the Soviet force

requires three to five days for combat readiness, the rest needs extensive mobilization to fill out, which may require as long as one month. Given these conditions, Soviet ground forces in the Far East appear to be designated for protecting the Sino-Soviet border and, hence, not likely to be available for an extensive involvement elsewhere, including Asia.

In the event of a serious clash with the Chinese, that is, a war rather than a limited border conflict, the Soviets would probably redeploy significant numbers of troops and equipment from their interior and Western military districts to the Far East, as they did in the 1945 campaign against the Japanese in Manchuria. The experience of that massive strategic transfer of about 750,000 troops and materiel--to supplement the 40 divisions already in the area--attracted considerable attention in Soviet military-historical writings in the mid-1960s, as did the Far East campaign itself. The military lessons learned in that campaign were deemed to be valid also for modern Soviet combat operations in the Far East and "lightning war" doctrine in general.<sup>1</sup>

Certain Soviet actions and statements have also suggested that a conflict on the Sino-Soviet border could escalate beyond a conventional war and involve the Soviet Rocket Forces. The appointment of first deputy commander of the Strategic Rocket Forces General Tolubko as a military district commander in the Far East from August 1969 to May 1972 signalled that Soviet ICBMs, mostly deployed in Siberia along the Trans-siberian Railroad, were a relevant factor also in a Sino-Soviet war. Similar signalling was also evident in Brezhnev's and Defense Minister Ustinov's recent tour of the Soviet Far East, which included a visit to the missile units at Novosibirsk. Here Brezhnev warned of Soviet capability to defend themselves "from possible aggression, wherever it arises." However, he added that the Soviet Army had been "provided with everything it needs," probably in order to preclude an interpretation of his visit and remarks as heralding a Soviet force buildup. These ambiguous signals are reminders that Soviet missile forces in the region serve as the over-all umbrella for Soviet security in the Far East. Invoking the strategic deterrent also lends concrete support to warnings in the Soviet press that a war provoked by the Chinese would bring calamity for the peoples of the world.

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<sup>1</sup>Despres et al. (1976).

The Pacific Fleet, too, has a strategic deterrent mission. Of its total 100 or so submarines, about 40-48 are nuclear-powered. Of these, about half carry ballistic missiles (estimates range from 17 to 23 such subs). However, Soviet SLBM's do not deploy to the East China Sea because its shallow waters are not suitable for these vessels and cruise mostly in the Pacific, including off the west coast of the U.S.

Even if technologically inferior to the Soviets, the Chinese Navy is the third largest navy in the world, deploying over a thousand ships. Countering Chinese naval forces would thus engage much of the Soviet Fleet's strength. The Pacific Fleet's major weapon against surface ships is the cruise missile. While 40 percent of the available cruise missile launchers can only be used in Soviet coastal waters, another 50 percent are carried by submarines, with the rest on board destroyers and cruisers. Of the estimated 24 cruise missile subs, 18 are nuclear-powered. This force could be used to interdict seaborne military and other supply shipments.

The attack and cruise missile submarines of the Soviet Pacific Fleet constitute a formidable force. This force, however, is seriously handicapped by geographic disadvantage. Vladivostok, which is the headquarters of the Pacific Fleet and out of which these submarines operate, opens onto the land-locked Sea of Japan. The three straits leading into open seas are flanked by Japanese territory. In time of war this can be expected to create problems for the movements of Soviet ships, including submarines. The other major Soviet port, Petropavlovsk, on the Kamchatka peninsula, opens onto the Pacific but is vulnerable to mine warfare. Additionally, because of its isolation, Petropavlovsk presents a likely target for an enemy surgical strike. It is the base for the Pacific Fleet's ballistic missile submarines.

Geography imposes major strategic disadvantages on the Soviet Pacific Fleet, necessitating its self-sufficiency. It cannot be readily reinforced by the Northern Fleet, since the Bering Strait is open only about three months of the year. Also, any reinforcements would have to pass by Alaska and Japanese territory to reach the Soviet naval bases on the Sea of Japan. It is to be expected that such movements would encounter effective interference at time of war. In this contingency,

control of Southern Kuriles islands would be of unquestionable military value for the Soviets because of their strategic location at the Soya straits between the Soviet-held South Sakhalin and the Japanese island of Hokkaido. In close proximity to Japanese territory, these islands offer the Soviets definite advantages in a defensive strategy as well as in projection of the Red Fleet's military power directly onto the Pacific. On both Iturup and Kunashir, the Soviets have constructed air bases housing Tupolev bombers and MIG fighters, as well as extensive radar installations for monitoring ships in the area. The military factor thus could well account for the rigid Soviet position on the islands in the face of Japanese claims. One cannot exclude the rationale that in the face of increased pressures on the Soviet Asian flank by China and Japan, as well as the U.S., the Soviets indeed consider the Southern Kuriles essential for their security and are willing to incur heavy political costs for the sake of retaining these forward deployment bases.

Soviet ships redeploying across the Indian Ocean similarly would have to negotiate the straits by the Japanese islands as well as the East China Sea, all of which at a time of military conflict could well be controlled by hostile forces.

It should also be noted that wartime resupply of Soviet forces by land would involve long transits from faraway supply centers in the European part of the USSR. At least until 1982, which is the official date for the planned completion of the Baikal-Amur railway, the Trans-siberian line will remain the only rail artery connecting the Soviet Far East with the country's industrial centers. Soviet appreciation of the criticality of seaborne supplies can probably be inferred from the fact that the Okean II maneuvers in April 1975 for the first time included Soviet convoy exercises protecting merchant ships in the Philippine seas, and also intercepting such ships east of Japan. It was also the first time that the Soviet Indian Ocean contingent participated in a major exercise.

Because of the constraints on the Pacific Fleet, one cannot exclude the possibility that, once Soviet naval involvement in Far East hostilities becomes critical, the Soviets might attempt to ensure control of

at least one of the three straits between the Sea of Japan and the Pacific in order to be able to project Soviet naval power eastward. Conversely, because of the geographic and the resultant logistics disadvantages, the Soviets might be reluctant to engage in an armed conflict in the Far East. This, however, does not exclude threats and possible demonstrations of force. Such are hinted at in a naval spokesman's recent analysis of local wars, which recommends the Soviet response to the 1956 Suez crisis as a model for Soviet counteraction when faced with the outbreak of a local war. According to Rear Admiral Stalbo:

In these conditions, the Soviet Union adheres firmly to the policy of deterring rather than permitting local wars and seeing to their quickest cessation should they break out. The steps taken by the Soviet government in 1956 at the time of the British-French-Israeli aggression against Egypt can serve as the most typical example [i.e., the Soviet threat to employ medium-range missiles against the major combatants, Britain and France].<sup>1</sup>

### CONCLUSIONS

Soviet policy statements and actions show that Moscow is very concerned about unfavorable long-term trends in Northeast Asia. These concerns center on China and Japan. The fact that these two states both make territorial claims on the USSR exacerbates the threat to Soviet security in Northeast Asia. By themselves, the two Asian powers will not be a serious military threat for a prolonged period. However, should they be joined by the U.S. in a common anti-Soviet front and thus receive U.S. material and political support, Soviet security, regionally and globally, would be seriously diminished.

Soviet policy statements bespeak an incipient Soviet re-orientation toward more accommodating policies in Northeast Asia to counter the trend toward an alignment of hostile states. The growing emphasis on "cooperation" indicates a perception that an uncompromising, hardline approach will not defuse the hostility of the major powers facing the USSR in the region.

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<sup>1</sup>Stalbo (1976), p. 23.

The continuing ambivalence of Soviet policy in using the carrot or the stick may arise from doubts about the benefits of more accommodating policies and from fear that such policies could engender additional demands and pressures. Or, it may reflect disagreement among opposing factions within the Soviet leadership.

Soviet statements cited in this paper reveal perceptions that the rival powers in Northeast Asia represent threats as well as opportunities to the Soviets. There is an appreciation of those U.S. policies, which are directed toward ensuring stability in Northeast Asia. Seeing Japan as a coming independent power in Asia, the Soviets calculate that this development would create parallel U.S.-Soviet interests in moderating Japan's ambitions. But it would also give the Soviets the opportunity to resonate with Japan's assertiveness vis-à-vis the United States. Pragmatic Soviet policy could also expect to reap political gains from China's socialist orientation and its possible attempts to advance its influence in Southeast Asia in conflict with U.S. and Japanese interests.

Relying exclusively on Soviet military power to secure Moscow's interests in Northeast Asia may well be seen as counter-productive, because this policy generates a "Soviet threat" paranoia and accompanying hostile policies vis-a-vis the USSR. Moreover, geographic and logistical constraints inherently impose severe limitations on Soviet military capability in the Far East. This military power can serve the purposes of deterrence and defense, but its capability to ensure a favorable outcome in a major contingency, involving the U.S., is doubtful.

Thus, it appears that both military and political constraints compel the Soviets to devise conciliatory, cooperative policies toward the other major powers in the region.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Research on this paper was concluded in May 1978 and thus did not encompass Soviet reaction to such major developments, as the Brzezinski visit to Peking and the signing of the Sino-Japanese friendship treaty. Up to now, Soviet response to these developments has been muted and in line with Moscow's policy as suggested in this paper, namely, intent on preventing an exacerbation of Soviet relations with the Asian powers and the United States.

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